ject to the condition that they will disin-vest upto 40% of their foreign equity to local partners within five years and if this is not possible, they will continue their endeavour to promote and encourage participation of local investors. Further, the approval is subject to the condition that the company will take all necessary approvals as required under the existing laws and regulations.

Loss sufffcred on account of low recovery in khandsari factories

2510. SHRIMATI MALTI SHARMA: Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) the magnitude of nationl loss suffered on account of low recovery in Khandsari factories and the steps Gov ernment are taking to improve the re covery;

(b) the total number of khandsari factories in the country and their distribution, State-wise and district-wise; and

(c) the number of persons employed in khandsari factories and the ways in which khandsari units are socially more beneficial than the sugar mills?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV): (a) to (c) The recovery percentage in khandsari factories ranges between 6-7 as against about 10% in vacuum pan sugar factories.

The khandsari industry is regulated by the State Governments. The data regarding the number of khandsari factories & the persons employed therein are not being maintained by the Central Government.

Steps to check repression against the Workers in various Industries

2511. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU:
SHRI BRATIN SENGUPTA:

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state the contribution of his Ministry to stop repression against the workers through retrenchments, lay-offs and lockouts in various industries during the last 5 years?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM): The provisions relating to lay-off, retrenchment, closure, lockouts etc, are contained in the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947. The Act provides cartain measures of protection to the workers in the event of lay-off, retrenchment and closure. The Act also prohibits lockouts under certain circumstances, keeping in view the interest of workers. According to the available statistics, in general, there is a declining trend in the number of strikes and lockouts, lay-offs, retrenchment and closure during the last five years.

Implementation of "Central Scheme for Liberation of Scavangers"

2512. SHRI JANARDAN YADAV: Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are implementing a scheme titled "Central scheme for liberation of scavengers";

(b) if so, the details of this scheme;

(c) the number of scavengers in Bihar benefited from this scheme during the years 1994-95 and 1995-96 and the target for 1996-97; and

(d) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA): (a) and (b) Yes Sir, Ministry of Welfare launched "The National Scheme of Liberation & Rehabilitation of Scavengers & their Dependents on 22nd March, 1992 with the objective of elimination of the inhuman practice of manual handling of night soil and filth by the end of VIII Plan Period. The main components of the scheme are:-

1. Rapid survery to identify Scavengers and their dependents and their aptitude for alternative trades.
2. Training of Scavengers and their dependents

3. Rehabilitation by providing a package of financial assistance. (c) and (d) The information is being collected from the State Government of Bihar which will be laid down on the Table of the House.

Surprise Checking of FPSs

2513. SHRI IQBAL SINGH: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the steps taken by Government to strengthen and improve the Public Dis tribution System in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether there is any proposal to conduct surprise checks on the Fair Price Shops under the Public Distribution System in the country;

(d) if so, the details of surprise checks on the FPS in Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan; and;

(e) the remedial steps Government propose to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV): (a) and (b) Strengthening and streamlinging the Public Distribution System is a continuous process. Suggestions and measures to improve the Public Distribution System (PDS) are discussed in the meetings of the Advisory Council on PDS in which Ministers in-charge of Food and Cvil Supplies Departments in the State GovernmentsUT Administrations are members. In 1992, as a measure to improve the reach of PDS, the Revamped PDS was launched. Under this scheme, foodgrains are issued at specially subsidised price in hill areas, tribal areas and Drought Prone Areas.

(c) to (e) The State Govemment/UT Administrations are responsible for all operational matters relating to the PDS including enforcement measures. State Govemments/UT Administrations have been delegated the authority under the Essential Commodities Act, 19SS which enables them to take action against persons indulging in malpractices in the distribution of Commodities under the PDS. State Governments/UT Administrations carry out raids and surprise checks in addition to regular inspections as part of their enforcement function. The Central Government has also advised State/UTs to set up Vigilance Committees of Consumers at the Fair Price Shops level to ensure people's participation in the supervision of the PDS.

Drastic increase in penality prescribed for under age marriages

2514. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Kamataka High Court has recently recommended to the Union Government that penalty prescribed for under age marriages be drastically increased to punish the guilty:

(b) if so, whether despite Central law, the under age marriages are continuing in the country and there is no check on such acts by the Central Government or the State Governments; and

(c) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA): (a) No recommendation has so far been received.

(b) and (c) Does not arise.

अनुसूचित जातियों / अनुसूचित जनजातियों के छात्रों को छात्रावास संबंधी सुविधाएं और अनुसूचित जातियों / अनुसूचित जनजातियों में बीच में ही स्कूल छोड़ कर चले जाने वाले छात्रों को रोकने के लिये उठाये गये कदम

2515. श्री अजीत जोगी:
श्री सुरेन्द्र कुमार सिंह:

क्या कल्याण मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) पिछले तीन वर्षों के दौरान प्रति-वर्ष अनुसूचित जातियों और अनुसूचित जनजातियों के कितने छात्रों को छात्रावास सुविधाएं प्रदान की गयी है;